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THE REALIZATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Letter dated 22 July 1992 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights

1. I have the honour to address myself to you concerning a matter to which we have called your attention for some time now, namely the position of the Greek minority in Albania. I feel I have to try to clarify a few points in response to certain moves by some representatives of "Omonia" or other parallel bodies. My Government has already provided the like in other international forums like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

2. Albania is passing through a difficult period of transition. This is being coupled with a radical institutional reform. The new legislation of my country is being adapted to the relevant norms of international law. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law underline this whole process. Respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities is being codified in Albania's legislation. Thus, the Greek minority in Albania,

which even under communism was never discriminated against, now enjoys those rights which international law guarantees. They have a party, "The Union for Human Rights", which represents them and from whose ranks two MP's occupy seats in the parliament. Besides them, other MP's of Greek minority have stood for other political parties during the last elections of 22 March 1992. On 26 July 1992, Albania will be having municipal elections, in which Greek minority representatives will be standing for local governors.

3. These developments, together with a number of other ones in other fields of life like education, freedom of worship etc., have already laid the foundations for a de facto implementation of all the relevant principles as described in the documents of the various international forums.

4. In the end, let me say that we are fully aware of the difficulties ahead. The new democratic Government is doing its best to live up to the commitments we have undertaken. We know that perfection lies far away, and we appreciate your understanding on the situation we are living through. But, at the same time, let me reiterate the determination of my Government to carry the reform on, with your much appreciated help and advice, and possibly in a relatively short time.

(Signed) Alfred Serreqi
Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Albania